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ABSTRACT

The study reported was conducted at Concordia University after using the CAN/DOC ordering system to procure documents in the sciences directly from the Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information (CISTI) to assess the efficiency of interlibrary loan (ILL) procedures using this system. This study focuses on the relative turn-around times and costs of CAN/DOC and possible alternatives. Present ILL procedures are described, a detailed breakdown of the average delays and cancellations is given, and costs are analyzed. The costs of four alternative models for the ordering of requests available at CISTI are outlined. It is recommended that requests of scientific documents available at CISTI be ordered via Telex, with CAN/DOC used only in special circumstances, because of the 50 percent saving in cost per document ordered; that preference be given to ordering from CISTI over Quebec or Ontario university libraries because of the faster service provided by CISTI; that the use of CAN/OLE for document verification be continued; and that efforts be made to encourage CISTI ILL and government officials responsible for its operation to improve the interlibrary loan service. Data are presented in five appended tables. (RBF)

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REPORT ON THE UTILIZATION OF THE CAN/OLE ONLINE DOCUMENT ORDERING SYSTEM (CAN/DOC) IN INTERLIBRARY LOAN OPERATIONS

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June, 1980

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1. Purpose

In September 1978 Concordia began using the CAN/DOC ordering system to procure documents in the sciences directly from CISTI. In order to fulfill the request made by Services Committee that a study be made of this system after approximately one year and in order to assess the efficiency of our current ILL procedures regarding use of this system, the present study has been undertaken.

This study focuses on the relative turn-around times and costs of CAN/DOC and possible alternatives.

The data is based on 1979 requests submitted to the Norris and SEL libraries. It is only recently (March 1980) that the Vanier ILL operation has begun using CAN/DOC.

2. Present procedures:

Periodical requests received at SEL with complete bibliographic information are checked against the Union List of Scientific Serials in Canadian Libraries. If CISTI is given as a location the request is then ordered online via CAN/DOC on the UNION database. CAN/DOC ordering is thus given preference over ordering from any other location. This includes Quebec PEBUQUILL locations which, in accordance with CREPUQ agreements, supply free photocopies to other Quebec University Libraries. CISTI's charge is $2.20 minimum for up to 10 pages, plus $0.22 per additional page, for photocopies.

NTIS documents from 1970 onwards are ordered directly through CAN/DOC when the report number is given.

For other technical reports from 1970 to present, monographs from 1977, conference papers and some periodicals with incomplete information, verification is attempted online on various CAN/OLE databases. If successful OON or UNION databases will be checked to determine whether or not the item is held by CISTI, and if this is the case the item will then be ordered directly via CAN/DOC.

Some use has been made of the CAN/OLE system for verification of requests in the social sciences and humanities, however the CAN/DOC ordering system does not apply to these materials at the present time. The CODOC database is occasionally used for government publications and the OONL file for verification of recent Canadiana.

3. Delays

A detailed breakdown of the average delays and cancellations quoted in this section is given in the Appendix in Table I through Table V.

Figures are based on a survey of CAN/DOC requests made between January 1979 and August 1979, and a survey of requests made to Quebec and Ontario University libraries during this same period. Requests to the latter institutions were made by telex, and all deliveries from these institutions and from CISTI were made via PEBUQUILL/IUTS. Since most requests to

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3. Delays (continued)

Ontario and Quebec Universities during the survey period were in the social sciences and humanities one would expect average turn-around times for these institutions to be slightly lower than they would have been were the same items sent as were sent to CISTI; this in virtue of the fact that a larger percentage of science requests are in divisional libraries that depend upon a central library to transfer telex requests. All figures quoted are in working days, and unless otherwise stated turn-around time refers to the period between date of sending a request by our library and date of receipt of the item requested.

The average turn-around time for CAN/DOC based on 201 requests was 5.9 days. Monthly averages ranged from a low of 4 days to a high of 8.1 days. The average turn-around time for Quebec university libraries was 7.7 days (140 items), and for Ontario universities it was 5 days (154 items). As almost all CAN/DOC requests are for copies turn-around times for photocopies from these institutions are much more meaningful for comparison with CAN/DOC than the overall average. Photocopies from Quebec university libraries required on the average 9.2 days (72 items), with monthly averages ranging from 5.6 to 32 days. Photocopies from Ontario libraries required an average of 7.8 days (45 items), with monthly averages ranging from 4 to 14.7 days. Thus the Quebec and Ontario averages are respectively 3.3 and 1.9 days longer than the CAN/DOC average.

Negative responses tend to be a problem in the CAN/DOC system, requiring an average of 22.5 days. However, a negative response occurs relatively infrequently, only 9.4% during the survey period. For Quebec university libraries the negative response is 25.7% with an average response time of 8.7 days and for Ontario libraries it is 27% with a response time of 5.3 days.

No comparative statistics can be given for interlibrary loans placed via telex to CISTI and those placed via CAN/DOC, since almost all requests to CISTI since September 1978 have been made through CAN/DOC. According to Interlibrary Loans at CISTI telex requests tend to be slightly faster as they are received when sent, whereas CAN/DOC requests are not received in the ILL department until the following morning. This difference may however be compensated for during busy periods by the fact that CISTI call numbers are automatically applied to CAN/DOC requests on certain data bases.

CISTI's internal statistics for the period under consideration are available only in terms of percentage of materials processed within 24 hours. These were: January 1979 - 71%, April 80% and July 82%. Given one day for communication of the request and two days transportation time (McGill-Concordia joint study of PEBUQUILL deliveries between January 1978 and August 1979), these statistics indicate that a large percentage of CAN/DOC requests - close to 80% - arrive at Concordia within 4 days.

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The internal time required to process requests at SEL (date request received to date request sent to CAN/DOC) was an average of 2.2 days. Monthly averages ranged from 1.1 to 5.9 days.

4. Costs

CAN/OLE bills from the year 1979 were used to determine total costs, costs of individual data base use, and the total number of orders placed and number of orders placed per data base. Statistics kept at SEL for the period January-May and July-October 1979 were used to determine the number of searches performed in total and by data base. The SEL statistics also included the number of items ordered, which, except for a few minor differences, agreed with the CAN/OLE bills for the above mentioned months.

The average cost of ordering documents via CAN/DOC was determined by dividing the total cost of Union data base use by the number of searches performed on that base. Total searches were slightly higher than orders (228 cf. 206) however since these non-order searches (primarily unsuccessful location searches) are less than 10% of the total we can safely assume they do not significantly affect the average obtained.

The average cost of verifications which do not result in CAN/DOC orders was determined by adding the total cost of databases other than Union, subtracting the cost of orders made on these databases (average order cost X total orders on databases other than Union) and dividing the remainder by the number of searches that did not result in orders.

The total cost for CAN/OLE searches in ILL for 1979 was $812.73. During this period 385 documents were ordered at an average cost of $1.67 per order. Total cost for CAN/DOC ordering for 1979 was $642.95.

The remainder of $169.78 may be attributed to the cost of online verification. During this period the average cost of an online verification attempt was approximately $1.96.

In considering whether or not CAN/DOC should be used in preference to Quebec University libraries we should add to the online cost the amount that would be saved using Quebec libraries in virtue of the CREPUQ photocopies agreement. A survey of 50 CAN/DOC requests made in 1979 showed that 23 or 46% could have been obtained from University libraries (PEBUQUILL) in Quebec. Assuming an average loss of $2.20 on each transaction (the CISTI minimum which is our actual cost in most cases) this would add $1.01 to the cost of each order, or a total of $324.31 ([385 orders - (54 NTIS reports + monographs)] X $1.01) annually.

The average ordering cost via CAN/DOC of $1.67 per order was calculated as precisely as is possible, given the data available, to exclude the processes of location and verification (since most requests on UNION will have been verified and determined to be at CISTI through ULSSCL prior to going online).

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Thus the cost savings in using this ordering method are limited to the costs of sending a telex which, for CISTI is approximately 29¢ (2 minutes X 14.5¢).

The above data permits the calculation of relative costs of four alternative models for the ordering of requests available at CISTI:

1. Status quo - all requests ordered via CAN/DOC.

   Cost per order - (1.67 + 1.01) $2.68

   Total cost (1979) - (2.68 X 385) = $1,032.00

2. Requests ordered via CAN/DOC but Quebec university libraries given priority.

   Cost per item - $(1.67 \times \frac{.90}{100} \times 54 + .29 \times \frac{.13}{100} \times 46 = \$1.03$

   Total cost - (385 X 1.03) = $ 397.00

3. All Requests ordered via telex from CISTI.

   Cost per item - (1.01 + .29) $1.30

   Total cost - (385 X 1.30) = $ 501.00

4. Requests ordered via telex from CISTI but Quebec university libraries given priority.

   Cost per item - $0.29

   Total cost - (385 X .29) = $ 112.00

5. Recommendations

1. That requests for scientific documents available at CISTI be ordered normally via Telex. CAN/DOC should be used only in special circumstances, for example when an item has been verified online and can be ordered as part of this same process.

   This would result in a saving of 50% or more on each document ordered (either $1.30 per item vs $2.68 or $0.29 vs $1.03). Although a slight additional delay would be added (1/2 day) by the need to communicate the request to the Norris Library, this would be at least partially offset by the fact that the request would go directly to CISTI's Interlibrary Loans Department. In addition the time between receipt of a request and ordering (2.2 days) may be slightly reduced as, in virtue of the relatively smaller number of requests being sent out online vs. by Telex there is likely to be more batching of such requests.

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2. That preference be given to ordering from CISTI over Quebec or Ontario university libraries when both are known repositories of a document.

   Compared to Ontario university libraries, CISTI's service is an average of 1.9 days faster and there is no additional cost. With respect to the approximately 46% of documents requested from CISTI that could be ordered from Quebec universities there is an additional cost of $2.20 (or $1.01 if spread over all documents ordered from CISTI). However the benefits of a reduction of 3.3 days in average turn-around time, a 15% higher fill rate and greater consistency outweigh the additional cost involved.

3. That the use of CAN/OLE for document verification be continued and encouraged.

   In many instances the $1.96 cost of a search will be less than that required to perform an equivalent manual search. In addition the currency and flexibility of online searching makes it a unique and indispensable search tool.

4. That efforts be made to encourage CISTI Interlibrary Loans and Government officials responsible for its operation to improve interlibrary loan service.

   This survey has revealed that the CISTI Interlibrary Loans service is superior from the point of view of fill rate and average and one-day turn-around. However the average of 22.5 days required for negative responses is clearly unacceptable. This would lead us to expect a similar high turn-around for "problem" requests that are filled, and indeed based on CISTI's claim of about 80% turn-around in 24 hours, the expected delay of 4 days for such items and the overall average of 5.9 days experienced, we can calculate that the 20% not sent out within one day take an average of 13.5 days! Interlibrary Loans at CISTI are aware of problems in these areas, and it would be to our advantage to pass on the information that has been obtained and whatever additional support we can produce.

APPENDIX

TABLE I

Internal delays in ordering materials via CAN/DOC: date request received to date item ordered.

	No. of Requests	Average delay (days)
January	83	2.2
February	31	1.6
March	26	1.2
April	12	2.1
May	43	1.1
June	16	5.9
July	9	4.7
August	3	4.0
Overall	223	2.2

TABLE II

Average delay in receiving materials via CAN/DOC: date ordered to date received.

	No. of Requests	Average Delay
January	73	5.4
February	26	6
March	23	4.4
April	12	5.8
May	40	7.1
June	15	8.1
July	9	5.9
August	3	4
Overall	201	5.9

TABLE III

Average delay in receiving materials from PEBUQUILL (Quebec) university libraries.

a) Photocopies

	No. of Requests	Average Delay
January	19	7.7
February	15	8.3
March	8	8.9
April	3	32.0
May	3	6.7
June	6	14.7
July	14	5.6
August	4	8.7
Overall	72	9.2

b) Monographs

January	11	6
February	10	6.6
March	16	8.1
April	6	5.2
May	10	4.8
June	5	5.2
July	6	5.3
August	4	4.7
Overall	68	6.1

c) Both types

Overall	140	7.7

TABLE IV

Average delay in receiving materials from IUTS (Ontario) university libraries.

		No. of Requests	Average Delay
a) Photocopies			
	January	16	8.1
	February	4	13
	March	10	6
	April	1	6
	May	2	4
	June	4	6.7
	July	5	5.4
	August	3	14.7
	Overall	45	7.8
b) Monographs			
	January	31	3.9
	February	11	2.6
	March	23	3.6
	April	4	3.5
	May	5	4.6
	June	14	4.1
	July	11	4.2
	August	10	4.5
	Overall	109	3.8
c) Both types			
	Overall	154	5.0

TABLE V

Cancellations

		%	Average Response Time
CAN/DOC		9.4	22.5
PEBUQUILL (QUEBEC)	44/171	25.7	8.7
IUTS (ONTARIO)	57/210	27.0	5.3